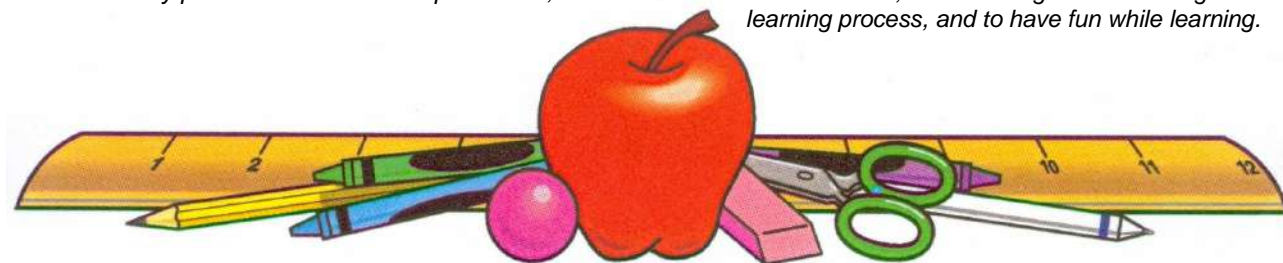# Eighth Grade Language Arts
Mari Lynn Fauceglia

Eighth Grade Language Arts is an integrated literature and language program that is aimed at helping students become *skillful readers, writers, speakers, and listeners who employ critical thinking skills, are motivated to work independently, as well as collaboratively, and who produce quality work.*
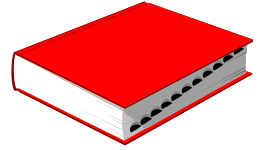
Goals

- *to help establish in each student a positive attitude and perception about writing;*

- *to emphasize the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing);*

- *to encourage students to take risks with their writing in order to grow as writers;*

- *to create an atmosphere in which writing matters because it is done for real reasons by writers who care about their topics;*

- *to provide an integrated approach to the teaching of grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary;*

- *to nurture reflection and self-evaluation;*

- *to foster a learning environment which focuses on cooperation and respect for each other and one that fosters cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity;*

- *to help students develop oral communication and listening skills;*

- *to use the tools of technology to get students involved in reading, writing, speaking, and listening;*

- *to help students master current and new technology, to communicate and collaborate with others, and to effectively problem solve to accomplish tasks;*

- *to promote a love for literature and positive attitudes toward reading;*

- *to help students see reading as an active process, using personal experience and strategies to create meaning;*

- *to encourage reflective discussions of literature that deepen comprehension and lead to student inquiry and critical thinking;*

- *to challenge students to read widely and intensively;*

- *to expose students to literature from multiple perspectives; to value diversity, and to exhibit sensitivity to cultural issues;*

- *to help students find, access, and use information, as well as evaluate the credibility of the information;*

- *to help students become risk takers in order to grow as readers and writers;*

- *to foster interaction and collaboration;*

- *to help students develop task organization/ management skills;*

- *to encourage students to work independently, whether developing goals or plans, managing their time and work, or evaluating their knowledge or learning process, and to have fun while learning.*

Textbooks

This year we will again be using **McDougal Littell Literature**, mini-anthologies from the D.C. Heath **Middle Level Literature**, and novels. Both series provide units that are built around the finest fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry. In addition, we will use **Language Network** and **The Writer's Craft** as a resource for grammar and writing.

All of the units are integrated; that is, they are structured so that writing, grammar, and vocabulary lessons come from the literature students are reading at the time. Specific strategy or mini-lessons are presented as they are needed and when they fit logically into the instructional program, allowing students to see the relevancy of each lesson and apply it immediately to their own work.

Some Components of the Program

READING
Mini-Lessons: Skills and Strategies
- Elements of Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Drama
- Strategies for Reading Fiction, Nonfiction, Poetry, Drama

Shared Reading
Guided Reading
Independent Reading
Literature Circles
Reader Response Journals (W.A.R.T.)
Study Island

WRITING, GRAMMAR, AND USAGE
Mini-lessons: Skills and Strategies
- Narrative Writing
- Persuasive Writing
- Informational Writing

Journal Writing (Free Writing)
Creative Writing
Grammar Study
Student/Teacher Writing Conferences
Study Island

WORD STUDY
Mini-lessons: Skills and Strategies
Story Vocabulary
Combining Forms: Latin and Greek Roots, Prefixes, and Suffixes
Pesky Pairs
Foreign Words and Expressions
Hot Picks (Common *SAT* Words)
Study Island

SPEAKING, LISTENING, AND MEDIA
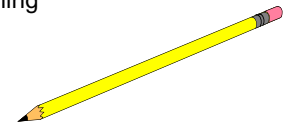Mini-lessons: Skills and Strategies
Discussion/Debate
Creative Dramatics/Theater Games
Multimedia Projects
PowerPoint Presentations
Collaborative Learning

Materials/Supplies

Students should bring all materials with them to class each day. The following materials are required:

Student Provides
- Three-ring binder (3")
- A package of 8 Section dividers
- *Post-it* notes
- Black or Blue pens
- Data Storage Device (USB Flash Drive)

School Provides
- Pencils
- Textbooks/Novels
- Notebook Paper

FYI

The district computers are now running **MS Office 2007 and 2010**. Those students who do not have **MS Office** at home can use **Google Docs**. **Google Docs** is a <u>free</u>, Web-based word processor, spreadsheet, presentation, form, and data storage service offered by Google. It allows users to create and edit documents online, upload and save documents from their desktop, edit them online from any computer, and invite others to read or edit their documents. Files are stored in Google's secure servers.

**Although it is <u>not</u> required, it would be helpful for students to have a USB Flash Drive to enable them to take their work back and forth from school to home. A Flash Drive is used as a small, lightweight, removable data storage device that creates a self-contained drive and media package the size of a thumb. It requires no cables and plugs directly into the USB port of any computer. It can store virtually any digital data from documents and presentations, to music and photos. The drives come is several sizes and start in price at $7.99. They can be purchased at Staples, Office Depot, Wal*Mart, etc.

Teacher Expectations

Late to Class: Students are expected to be in their seats and working when the tardy bell rings.

Leaving the Room: Students may not leave the room once class begins (unless it is an emergency and they have been given permission to leave). Except in the event of an emergency, students must get a pass signed by the teacher and must sign out before they leave the room.

Classroom Citizenship:

- I expect students to behave in a dignified, responsible manner while they are in my class.

- I expect them to be polite to their classmates and to me.

- I expect them to stay on task and work collaboratively during literature circles or writing workshop and to follow the guidelines for working in groups that we set together.

- I expect them to work independently on their reading or writing activities during W.A.R.T.

- I expect my students to complete all of their work and to submit it on time. I give students time in class to complete most of their assignments, and I allow them ample time to submit them. If they work during the time allotted in class, they will be able to complete all of their assignments in a timely manner. Points will be deducted from late assignments. Late assignments will be docked from 30 percent to 50 percent, depending on the assignment.

- In the case of illness, I expect students to make up their work as per school policy—one day for each day absent (the exception is an extended illness).

- I expect my students to feel free to share their ideas with the class; in turn, I expect them to show respect and tolerance for the feelings and ideas of others.

- I expect students to show respect for other students' personal space and property.

- I expect them to take care of our classroom, our equipment, and our materials.

- I expect them to follow all of the school rules.

If we all cooperate and share with each other, we will have a warm classroom environment and a successful year.

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STUDY ISLAND

   Study Island is a web-based program which will help our students prepare for the **Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA).** Sharpsville students can access it from any computer with an Internet connection and a standard web browser.

   Students simply log on to www.studyisland.com to access the program.

   I will be making regular assignments that students will be expected to complete, either in school or at home.

   Once the program is operational, I will take students to the lab, give them their passwords, explain how to "Login," and explain how to find their assignments.